

Feeney, A., Sikaneta, S., Harkness, P., and Lucas, M. (2017) Ultrasonic compactio Heddon, D., and Myers, M. (2017) The walking library: mobilising books, places, readers and reading. *Performance Research*, 22(1), pp. 32-48. (doi:[10.1080/13528165.2017.1285560](https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2017.1285560))

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<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/135209/>

Deposited on: 24 January 2017

"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Performance Research: On Libraries."

The Walking Library: Mobilising books, places, readers and reading

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Introduction: The Walking Library

The Walking Library is an ongoing art project which brings together walking and books; in its simplest conceptualization, it is a library that carries books by foot. The idea for The Walking Library was prompted initially by our encounter with repeated references to books carried on long walks during the nineteenth century; for example, in 1818 Keats walked across the Lake District and to Scotland with Dante's Divine Comedy and John Muir, on his thousand mile walk to the gulf in 1867, carried Robert Burns' poetry, Milton's Paradise Lost, William Wood's Botany, and a small New Testament. We became interested in the relationship between mobility, place and books, how the experience of reading is changed by the journey and the places where a book is read and vice versa. These historical experiences were the catalyst for the question: what book would we choose to carry with us? Not only was the response to this question informed by the context of the walk, but also by a sociable impulse; we extended the question to others as an invitation to join us in assembling a library and exploring another question collectively: what happens when a book is taken on a walk?

The Walking Library was initiated in 2012 as a mobile library for the Sideways Festival, a peripatetic, ecologically-focused month-long arts festival that aimed to re-mark the old pathways of the Flanders region of Belgium by walking them. Our library of books was carried in backpacks by volunteer librarians along the 334 kilometres of the festival's route in the company of and for use by the other commissioned artists of the festival. This event prompted specific engagements with books, documented in our essay 'Stories from The Walking Library', an account and analysis of the relationships engendered between walking, journeying, reading, writing and landscape (Heddon and Myers 2014). Similar to anthropologist Tim Ingold we recognized ourselves and our

companion walkers and readers as wayfinders, with walking and reading acknowledged as modes of ambulatory and ambient knowing, the book and environment existing in and approached as a dialogic becoming-in-process (Ingold 2011: 154, 230, 179; Heddon and Myers 2014: 640, 652-53). Thus, we offered 'Stories' as a meshwork of occurrences or topics constructed as we moved along different lines of enquiry relating to reading, walking and writing, including how a walk, as a space of knowledge production, is written and read. We aspired to an epistemological practice of the emergent and the encounter, 'knowing as we go' rather than presuming to know before setting off. We came to understand The Walking Library as an entanglement of interwoven and coexisting pathways, 'trails along which life is lived' (Ingold 2007: 81).

If in 'Stories' we proposed that The Walking Library offered itself as a mobile laboratory for exploring relationships between walking, reading and writing, in this essay, a sequel of sorts to 'Stories', we seek to engage further with that laboratory, drawing subsequent Walking Libraries into our discussion. Our focus in 'Stories' was primarily on the relationship of walking to texts, positioning the peripatetic less as a mode of transport than a particular modality of mobile attention (Heddon and Myers 2014: 640). Here, prompted by the theme of this journal, we turn our attention to The Walking Library's function as a library, asking: 'What sort of library is a walking library? What does a walking library do -- for its books and its borrowers and the places through which it moves? And what can it reveal or teach us about libraries, books, reading and environment?' This turn foregrounds the fact that the books carried by The Walking Library are mobile in multiple ways: like those accompanying Keats and Muir, they can be carried; but they are circulated and shared rather than owned. Instead of archiving books for perpetuity, The Walking Library depends upon and promotes the movement of books amongst social networks through gifting, lending and borrowing. It is the social capacity -- the social capital -- of The Walking Library, and of walking and reading, which concerns us most here.

Since its first outing at Sideways, The Walking Library has developed spatially and discursively to orchestrate emergent, non-linear and self-organising configurations

through movement and communication in space and time (Myers 2009: 71). However, all our libraries have involved the unvarying properties of walking and reading books. The configuration of these properties together promotes reading itself as a mobile, social, placed and place-making practice. Each Walking Library is a response to a particular context of walking and gathers in turn a singular collection of books and walkers. The collection is assembled from personal suggestions and donations offered in response to a question that we pose as an organising logic for the given walk, more as a curatorial directive than imperative. Whilst the books gathered for each Walking Library persist as tangible and lasting objects, the Library itself is a temporary and mobile form, dependent entirely on being activated by walkers and readers. It emerges -- or becomes -- as people walk together and share readings. Thus, we conceive of The Walking Library as a performance event taking place in time and space, an ephemeral act walked and read into existence. The Walking Library, dependent as it is on specific books, people and places, is thus a contingent staging of an encounter of mutual and dynamic relations. It reveals itself as a temporary structure of transitory affordances, a shifting constellation of seemingly equal agents: a collection of people, books and places constantly responding and rearranging or corresponding.

Our attention to the mobilising attributes of The Walking Library is made at a pivotal moment in the histories of libraries and reading, where forms, practices, behaviours, infrastructures and relationships between libraries, their holdings, their spaces and their temporal frames are in transition. The history of reading practices and mobile libraries reveals that reading is a complex endeavour and the species of libraries are just as diverse. Understanding and exploring that diversity at this moment of change is important; The Walking Library has offered both a unique concept and form of library and practice of reading alongside a mode of researching and understanding the varied practices and forms of reading that libraries offer.

The Mobility of Books

Books and travelling have a long-conjoined history. The very desire for mobility, for carry-ability, is encoded in the modern -- print -- book's design (Manguel 1997: 128).

Aldus Manutius invented the first octavo sized edition precisely so it could fit into a gentleman's pocket (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005). The book's portability is pivotal to its lend-ability. Once mobile, the book could travel both with and to people, spurring technologies for its wider distribution and greater accessibility, which developed in turn new geographies and demographics of reading.

The first 'mobile library' is credited to Samuel Brown, who inaugurated in 1817 an itinerating library scheme in East Lothian, Scotland, aiming to furnish all the towns and villages of his county with libraries of useful books (East Lothian Itinerating Libraries 1830: 2). Building up an initial collection of 200 books from contributions and financial donations, Brown's library comprised four divisions of fifty books each, accompanied by a book-box, catalogue, stationary and a donations box. Each division was stationed in a village centre -- a house, shop or school -- for two years, after which it was swapped with a fresh division. This first mobile library was thus comprised of a collection of books which circulated amongst people and communities systematically, a mobility captured poetically by Brown's son when he writes of his father placing books 'in the state of perpetual motion over the face of the earth [...]', in order to aid in the 'ultimate illumination of the world' (Brown 1856: 61).

Brown's scheme influenced the formation of itinerant libraries across the UK. G.I.J. Orton reports that 'by 1821 there were around 1,500 circulating libraries' (1980: 7). Noting also the loaning activities of tobacconists and street hawkers, Orton proposes that millions of books were lent annually (8), long before the establishment of public libraries. Of particular interest to us is Orton's reference to street hawkers, implying as it does the presence of libraries carried by foot. Institutionally-organised subscription circulating libraries were also delivered in this way. The monthly journal, The British Workman, and Friend of the Sons of Toil, records just such a venture in 1857:

We have been much interested by hearing from a gentleman who recently travelled in Cumberland, of a happy looking old man who was wheeling along the high road a novel looking burden. On enquiry, it proved to be the Perambulating

Library; the large box containing a supply of books which the messenger was taking from Mealsgate to Bolton New Houses. On depositing his burden, he would then have to take the books which had been in use at Bolton New Houses forward to another village, and so on for a circle of eight villages (1857: 104).

[Insert image 1: The Perambulating Library]

Our Walking Library is also not the first to go by this name. A captioned archival photograph from the 1930s, held by the VSW Soibelman Syndicate News Agency Archive, reads:

THE WALKING LIBRARY

London, England -- Critics are always remarking that we in this country lag behind those of European countries when it comes to borrowing books from libraries. Well, this enterprising girl at Ramsgate solves the problem taking her books in a rack tied to her back round the streets and from door to door and people can borrow them for a week at the price of twopence.

CREDIT-- SOIBELMAN SYNDICATE, N.Y.

[Insert Image 2: B&W photo]

Whilst Ramsgate's walking librarian is framed as an entrepreneur, mobile libraries have been a key tool in the greater democratisation of library services. David Muddiman notes that as early as the 1970s some UK-based librarians proposed that such models of 'outreach' epitomised by the mobile library might become

the dominant mode of delivery of library services, largely replacing a buildings-based operation. The public library would, as a consequence, become 'deinstitutionalised' and much more closely in tune with the needs of community/communities. (Muddiman 2008: 89; italics in original)

Muddiman's comments suggest that the mobile library dissolves not just geographical distances between library services and communities, but also cultural projections; the public library in its mobile form is reconceived as a library of and for diverse publics.

Though mobile library services have declined recently across the UK -- a recent BBC news report claims that of 343 closures acknowledged by library services in 2016, 142 were mobile (BBC 2016) -- they remain a vital method of transporting books worldwide to isolated communities with restricted access to free and fixed library services (Kenneally and Payne 2000: 63). As Alex Johnson documents in Improbable Libraries (2015), Colombia's biblioburro -- a library carried by two donkeys -- continues to deliver books to residents of the country's Caribbean shoreline (Johnson 2015: 51). Donkey or mule libraries are also used in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Venezuela, an elephant library in Laos, and camel libraries in Kenya (51-52). The *Epos* boat library delivers books during the winter months to the western coast of Norway. With both US and Australian public mobile libraries there is a trend towards convergence of their services with other partners to not only lend books, but also information technologies, internet and a range of services they make available to remote communities (Polanka 2011, 68) where communications infrastructure is not in place or pricing structures are prohibitive to high-speed access (Polanka 2011: 52). Other emergent mobile library services are similarly community-responsive, such as the mobile bike libraries which feature in many cities, including the Books on Bikes organisation in Seattle (Johnson 2015: 68, 164) and the New York City's Uni Project, comprised of 'pop-up, open air reading rooms' located in different public spaces across the city (162). Johnson explains that the Uni Project is not a circulating library; rather, its 'goal is to encourage communal reading in public, with people enjoying books together in the vicinity of the pop-up library itself' (ibid.). Documentation of these very different mobile library services shows that their mobility engenders other temporary and mobile practices including gathering, browsing, lending, borrowing and exchanging.

Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Battles engage with innovative library service extensions in their explicitly propositional text, The Library beyond the Book (2014). Noting that the itinerant and perambulating library endures in different forms, the questions they pose help us think through some of the actions facilitated by The Walking Library, a project very much conceived of as more than simply a collection of books:

What form could or should bookmobiles assume in the digital age? [...W]hat can be delivered in physical space that cannot be adequately or meaningfully delivered via data networks or fixed-location libraries? [...M]omentary libraries, not to mention their mobile and mobilizing peers, help to fuel the imagination. (Schnapp and Battles 2014: 102, 118)

The Walking Library does not occupy architectural space, but emerges within an 'architextural meshwork' (Lefebvre in Ingold 2007: 80); a library without walls but not a 'virtual library'. It 'becomes' through spatial, temporal and discursive movement along lines of inhabitation, making place through the interweaving of relations between people, books and environments. Something of an open-air reading room, its shifting and ephemeral status positions it in stark contrast to the library as iconic monument or memorial to a benefactor, the 'cathedrals of learning' exemplified by Andrew Carnegie's library buildings (Pepper 2008: 585). For Schnapp and Battles, 'Few institutions have been more intimately associated in the collective mind with permanence, fixity, and the long term preservation of knowledge than libraries' which function as 'living mausolea and civic monuments' (2014: 96). The Walking Library is conceived instead as a project of civic performance: an open, responsive and unfolding event. In answering the question, 'What sort of library is The Walking Library?', we might propose that it is a library born of improvised and collaborative action which offers at least one response 'to closed and controlled versions' of the library (Schnapp and Battles, 2014: 27). Or perhaps The Walking Library simply makes visible, through its tangible improvisational structure, that such a version of the library was always already a fiction (never mind an outdated one).

Built libraries might suggest a space of immobilization, of the categorical, ordered and precise (Manguel 2006: 47). However, they exceed such seemingly fixed parameters or ambitions and intentions through performances of the combinatorial, of the 'polyglot drift across time' (Schnapps and Battles 2014: 32). People and texts mix in unexpected and fluid configurations, proposing the library as a site of flux. For example, libraries prompt

the act of literary drifting, with eyes meandering across shelves. Similarly, each book's portability renders possible an escape from the confines of static buildings and bookshelves and potential contact with other books, setting up unexpected pathways of contiguity as books enter into unscripted dialogue with each other. Albert Manguel evokes something of the library book's poetic mobility: 'A library is not only a place of both order and chaos; it is also the realm of chance. [...] Left to their own devices, [books] assemble in unexpected formations; they follow secret rules of similarity, unchronicled genealogies, common interests and themes' (Manguel 2006: 194). From its initial invitation for donations, to its subsequent invitation to participants to select a book to take for a walk, and then to select an extract to share with other walking-participants in a chosen place, The Walking Library facilitates this assembly of unexpected formations. An eclectic range of books is gathered up and walked; texts from across centuries and genres are shared in different places ushering in happenstance encounters and moments of exquisite serendipity as environment, book and text align momentarily. Such a moment of 'things' lining up is illustrated by a sharing offered at the beginning of The Walking Library for Women Walking in Bristol. As we left the Glynne Wickham Theatre building, Heike stopped the group almost immediately. Carrying Tamara Ashley and Simone Kenyon's The Pennine Way: The Legs that Make Us (2006), she noted that the book's cover image -- a pencil sketch of two women walking side by side, carrying rucksacks -- bore an uncanny resemblance to Dee and Helen walking at the front of the group. The book's cover had attuned Heike's attention to the particular spatial configuration of bodies walking convivially. Our library's literal openness onto the world beckons such chance assemblages. However, it also reflects perhaps the openness of all libraries as spaces for the improvised and dynamic, the unplanned and relational (Schnapps and Battles 2014: 33).

Sociable books and words

The mobile books of The Walking Library are not just vehicles for mobilizing thought, but are engines for sociability, material objects 'central to specific social networks [which] entail a temporary occasioned encounter' (Urry 2007: 234). The encounter, here, is with and between other people, places and texts. The Walking Library thus has

a particularly social architecture. In his study of British Public Libraries since the 1850s, social historian Alistair Black reveals the impact of library architecture on reading practices; for example, the imposition of silence in public libraries prohibited readers from discussing their reading and the ideas it prompted (some of them presumably radical) (Black 2009). With its invitation to participants to share extracts from books selected and carried, The Walking Library provides a stage of sorts for improvised readings. In this respect, it is a determinedly generative and intentionally playful practice, aiming to transform thought by association (Manguel 2006: 32). Figurative and literal paths are created through and between the folds and passages of ears and books' pages, as ideas and information are mobilized into collages or bricolages of different texts read alongside one another.

The refracted relationship of texts to each other, the texts' unplanned and unforeseen encounters and the distribution and constellations of knowledge which emerge, are reflected in the Walking Library for Women Walking's engagement with Jeppe Hein's sculpture in Bristol, Follow Me. The work is a mirrored labyrinth. Walking with participants attending a conference on theatre and performance, it did not seem inappropriate to be directive, and so a collective reading was staged within the sculpture. At the count of three everyone began to read aloud from their selected book, generating a cacophonous, choral reading which ran on for a few minutes. The sounds of voices and texts mingled, cut, and bounced off each other, mirroring the self-images of the group which seemed to reflect towards infinity. Books, voices, words, people, sites and sights were multiplied and amplified in a dizzying oral, aural and visual array of connections and disconnections, magnifications, overlaps and disjunctures.

[Insert image 3]

Dependent on a congregation of people The Walking Library establishes itself as a sociable reading venue, one which highlights reading as an always located, embodied and sensual-social act. The explicit sociality we claim for The Walking Library is also not without historical precedence. By the late eighteenth century the book had become a significant pivot for social gatherings, illustrated through the formation of "book

societies”, “reading societies”, “book clubs” and “literary societies” (Rehberg Sedo 2011: 3). As Jenny Hartley notes, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, ‘reading groups were a well-established part of the British literary scene’, contributing to what Jürgen Habermas analysed as the bourgeois public sphere (Hartley 2011: 44). Hartley identifies education, enlightenment and friendship as attributes promoted by reading groups and taken up ambitiously through national-level organizations including Societies for Mutual Culture and the National Home Reading Union.

Reading aloud the books carried in The Walking Library and mobilizing words into space also has precedence. Whilst books prior to the invention of printing had been written by hand, such writing was marked by the devices of the oral culture from which it emerged, including dialogic, conversational and rhetorical forms mimetic of speech (David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery 2005: 37). A shift from orality, from the communal and social to the individual and from performance to introversion, was heralded by the introduction of the printing press (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005: 105, 101). The Walking Library returns the book to performance, but it tries to keep in balance an interplay of the internal and external, as participants shuttle between reading silently and then reading extracts to fellow walkers. Conceived as a kineasthetic and spatial practice, The Walking Library places words through movement in literal space -- lifting them off the page through reading them aloud within and in relationship to specific places. Gaston Bachelard, in his analysis of the vocal value of words in Baudelaire’s poetics, proposes, ‘At times the sound of a vocable, or the force of a letter, reveals and defines the real thought attached to a word’ (Bachelard 1972 [1958]: 198). Reading out loud may only approximate the slow meditation Bachelard suggests may be necessary to develop ‘extreme sensibility’ to phonetic phenomena (ibid.). However, the vocalization of words may go some way to developing a sensibility to words that reveals connections not only between the sound and the word, but between the word and the environment in which it is spoken.

Historically, it has been commonplace for audiences to congregate in public to listen to readings of books and “lend ears” to a tale’ (Manguel 1997: 47). Just as our Walking

Library follows in the history of mobile libraries and congregated readers, so too does it follow in the footsteps of bookish entertainers and forms of readerly entertainment. In the eleventh century, with comparatively few people able to read, books were made mobile and accessible by travelling troubadours who read aloud to gathered crowds or, as in the case of the *joglars*, recited or sang memorised songs or verses (Rehberg Sedo 2011: 3). Our invitation for lent ears is extended beyond the immediate aural vicinity of The Walking Library's participants. For example, on one leg of The Walking Library for Sideways Festival volunteer librarian, Hilary, stopped to read to a woman on a motorized scooter whom she had met along a dirt track running between fields of freshly cut barley and a vast blue sky, all three stretching to the infinity of the horizon. Hilary translated Thomas A. Clark's poem 'The Grey Fold' from The Ground Aslant (2011) from English into French, a common language held between the two women. The reading proceeded more as a dialogue between them as Hilary searched for the right words and the woman anticipated what the image might be, suggesting her own translations. When Hilary recited the poet's address to 'you' in the poem, 'you are the one/ walking alone/ intermediary between/ earth and sky'(Clark 2011: 39-52), the woman responded 'oui', acknowledging the recognition of herself in the landscape of the poem. Encouraged by this encounter, Hilary continued to offer this 'extension' service of troubadourial readings to other passersby, mobilizing new relations with strangers through the eventness and sociability of reading to/gether.

Roger Chartier proposes that reading aloud and in company created 'a social bond' amongst the upper classes of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, when the ordinary occurrences of informal public readings united people around a book and fostered 'convivial social relations' (Chartier 1989: 104). The reading aloud of books 'both signified and reinforced the commitment of friendship' (107). In a context in which reading aloud was no longer a necessity, it became 'an exercise in sociability'. The sociality afforded by reading, transcending the supposed binary between print and speech, positioned it as an act which articulated 'one person's rapport with others, with all the complexity such relations implied' (117).

The continued sociability afforded by shared readings, of reading aloud to each other, is demonstrated in all of The Walking Libraries created to date. The structure of the library itself garners a defined sociability, gathering people up into a single, mobile group whose formation shifts while it walks, its shape responding in part to the environment walked through (walking side-by-side on the pavement, or in small groups through a park, or in single file through packed crowds). Walking's conviviality (Heddon 2012; Myers 2010) is harnessed strategically by The Walking Library. The act of reading to one another instils a sense and practice of reciprocity because the shared readings function as the material of social bonding. Each reading is given and received and given in return; reading, then, is an act of exchange. During the Sideways Festival, for example, shared readings were offered sometimes whilst walking and often at the difficult stretch of the journey when a great deal of mental effort and determination was required to overcome fatigue and pain, the consequences of the duration of the walk. With The Night Walking Library we not only read to sleeping libraries as acts of appreciation and commitment for the services they provide, but to each other to stay awake while walking until dawn. As Misha swayed and listened with eyes closed, Dee read more dramatically, louder, emphatically, to try and keep her companion present and alert. These instances of our libraries' reciprocated readings engendered interrelationship and fortitude as they drew the thoughts outward beyond the self and into the company of other walkers and the environment.

The Walking Library has revealed itself as a wholly collaborative and distributed performance, dependent on the generosity not only of the donors of books, but on those who donate readings, with this offer of 'reading to' seeming to prompt not just reciprocity, but also mutual and layered attentiveness: to the reader, the text, and the environment with(in) which it is deliberately placed. Listening becomes a multi-directional and multi-directed activity: listening to the reciter, to the recitation and to the site. The Walking Library creates a space for paying attention and for intentional hearing. In their reading to others, our readers also seek to do justice to the book they have selected and carried -- often protectively, sheltering it from the wind or rain -- and perhaps to those who have donated it; and then, in turn, to the extract they have chosen

to share, whether randomly or deliberately. A generous reading is enacted, mirrored by a generous listening -- which is to suggest a reading and listening that are expansive and engaged.

As part of the Walking Library for Women Walking in Bristol, we ambled along Convocation Walk in the city's Royal Fort Gardens. At a large wooden installation, which resembled a group of people (just like our group), Katie climbed onto a plinth to share from her selected book, which also happened to be the book she had donated to the library: Rose Tremain's Sacred Country (1992). Katie's rationale for donating this book is written on the library card attached inside its front cover:

It's a book about how important it is to follow your own truth, and what you risk in doing so. There is a line at the start that plays over in my head, it's the best sentence I've ever read. 'On the Suffolk farms, a light wet snow began to fall like salt.'

[Insert images 4 & 5]

On Convocation Walk, Katie's reading arrived at her cherished sentence. The fragment of her chosen story was released, filling the spaces between us. We stood in the humid air and imagined snow like salt, falling lightly. The etymology of the word 'convocation' is an assembly of people, but more specifically, the action of calling together (Online Etymology Dictionary). Katie enunciated through an embodied articulation delivered from atop a plinth the personal value of this book to the group gathered by her declamation to receive it. The recited words were like a magnet; spoken aloud, they forged a sticky auditory space or acoustic ecology (Carter 2004: 44-45). As with audio walks, reading in this context may enliven a mode of attention, an active or dialogic mode of listening that enacts a transference or form of touch where voice, ear and environment are enfolded into and shaped by one another (Myers 2011). Tremain's words, spoken by Katie, were brought to life in the sense that they were made material forces, words that we felt literally, through the skin and organs of our bodies (Connor 2004). Listening, we hear both Katie and Tremain; and, in the bridge erected by speech

we hear ourselves too -- a tripled sort of reading then which recollects Michel de Certeau's proposition of reading as 'poaching', by which he means reading as the site of active production between author and book (de Certeau 1984: 165).

In the tangible locution that is reading aloud we listeners get to hear something of the act of singular readerly production, a production that includes the 'orchestration of the body' and 'movement of a muscular manducation' (de Certeau 1984: 175). Our hearing is augmented in The Walking Library through the choice of its siting, the selected place of locution which allows spoken text and environment to work in tandem in suggesting singular ways through the book. The selection of text and place offers uniquely personal perspectives and viewpoints. This shared text remains an 'open' text, though, since what we hear is itself a poaching, a 'reading' out of and into what is staged before us. Our attentive listening is not one of simple transference between the spoken and the heard, as the space between us persists and in that space, imagination has room to roam.

Where we depart from de Certeau's recognition and celebration of the reader as poacher is in his assumption about a greater autonomy attached to the silent reader. De Certeau's proposition is that the vocal reader 'interiorized the text; he made his voice the body of the other; he was its actor' (de Certeau 1984: 176). We presume that de Certeau is referring here to those writings which, as noted above, were written as speech. In contrast, 'today, the text no longer imposes its own rhythm on the subject'. For de Certeau, the withdrawal of the body is 'a distancing of the text', which allows for greater autonomy of the reader. Where the body of the vocal reader, vocalizing the author, rooted text to the place of its author's production, the body distanced from the text and 'emancipated from places' is, for de Certeau 'freer in its movements'. Silent reading 'frees itself from the soil that determined it' and is dependent only on the eye; an autonomous eye which 'suspends the body's complicity with the text'. Sight reading allows for speed reading and an acceleration of 'movements across the page, an autonomy in relation to the determinations of the text and a multiplication of the spaces covered' (ibid.).

De Certeau's positioning of silent reading being more autonomous in its effects seems as presumptuous as the argument he is at pains to challenge: that readers are passive consumers. Why must speed and subjugation of voice and movement be the emancipating tactics that bring autonomy for the reader? And is autonomy, in any case, over-valued? Baudelaire's poetics suggest that slow contemplative reading may bring the reader closer to the thought attached to the word. In this sense, the intermingling bodies and minds of author and reader might suggest an erasure of autonomy. However, de Certeau's focus on the reader as producer, forged through his oppositional politics of tactical subversion, risks forgetting that reading can also be an act of communication, a relational dialogism which embraces the inevitability of difference by working precisely in-between the text and subjectivity. Furthermore, writing as performance scholars, our understanding of theatre tells us that the actor is never a neutral mediator or vessel of the text (as logos), nor indeed the passive mouthpiece of the author, but creatively interprets and expresses her own rhythm through her singular interiorization of the text exteriorized in singular movement and vocalization (accent, intonation, pitch, gesture). The Walking Library creates a space for this dialogic poetics of reading to be theatricalized (projected and not dislodged from visibility or place) through a physical and vocal sensibility and mobility that is location-aware and responsive.

Place-making of reading

In an outdoor tutorial space with swivel classroom-like seats pinioned into the concrete, Ellie shared an extract from The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon (1971 [1002]):

When a woman lives alone, her house should be extremely dilapidated, the mud wall should be falling to pieces, and if there is a pond, it should be overgrown with water-plants. [...]

I greatly dislike a woman's house when it is clear that she has scurried about with a knowing look on her face, arranging everything just as it should be, and when the gate is kept tightly shut. (Shōnagon, 1971, p.182)

Ellie chose this text as a staged intervention into an overly managed space; her reading was a sited and emplaced one which prompted discussion from the group about both the architectural environment and the remarkable publication by a woman written around the year 1000. Participatory readings, offered and placed in situ, function simultaneously as sites of dwelling and travelling; we dwell in the word and the space whilst also following or creating other trajectories, undoing and redoing the word and the text as we unmake and remake the world through this interrelationship. The text is a tool of socialization, but it is also socialized in its performed collaboration and extension literally into the world.

Histories of reading often portray it as a means of escape or retreat from social life, of creating a space and time of refuge, perhaps indicating its unique place-making capacities. Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries across Western Europe, reading, at least for the literate class, 'became the act par excellence of intimate, private and secret leisure' (Chartier 1989:103). Such reading is described as a pleasurable 'retreat from society, a withdrawal from the affairs of the city to the sheltering silence of solitude' (ibid.). Montaigne depicts the library as refuge: 'I try to make my authority over it absolute, and to withdraw this one corner from all society, conjugal, filial, and civic' (ibid.). Roger Chartier proposes that the act of reading 'defines a new consciousness', one constructed 'outside the network of interrelationships that make up social and domestic life' (104). We are struck, here, by analogies that may be drawn between reading and walking since the latter has been valued similarly for its supposed capacity to offer refuge or escape from the demands of society (Heddon 2012). Two of the most frequently cited references demonstrate our point efficiently: Rousseau revered walking alone because it served to erase 'everything that makes me feel my dependence, [...] everything that recalls me to my situation' (Rousseau 1953: 382); whilst Thoreau's health and spirits reputedly required at least four hours a day 'sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields absolutely free from all worldly engagements' (Thoreau 1862). Marielle Macé's more recent interrogation of

reading's solitude perhaps offers a more useful approach for us, bridging as it does internal and external experiences.

Macé maps the ways in which reading is fully part of life, contributing to the 'form, flavor, even style' of our individual existence (2013: 213); each book offers its reader 'potential "paths" to our attention and perception, and our capacities for action' (2013: 217-18). However, for Macé, as for Marcel Proust (2011), the attitude appropriate to reading is one of solitude, a 'cloistered and private context' (Macé 2013: 224). This reclusion -- a separation and distance -- places the reader at the 'edge' of both time and things, establishing an inside and outside. Seclusion is necessary, according to Macé, because it structures a particular approach to the work of art, simultaneously diverting, rendering denser and extending our attention to it (226). The distance between the art and the self is the space that fosters and facilitates a stretch across, from here to there, or a change in direction, perspective or attitude and the performance of new practices.

Closing oneself off in order to read, therefore, means not only turning ones back on the outside, but simultaneously trying out new ties and postures in relation to what is outside, rendering a cognitive situation more dense and constituting oneself in an image (228).

In Macé's conceptualization, then, the outside is figured as already inside. Similarly, Bachelard suggests that the experience of interiority and exteriority are reconciled with poetic spatiality, movement and the deepening of human solitude; these two kinds of immensity, of space, intimate and exterior 'keep encouraging each other, in their growth' (Bachelard 1972 [1958]: 201). The Walking Library creates a threefold path towards this sense of 'intimate immensity' with the world (ibid.): the invitation for walkers to read to one another engenders a space for attentiveness and contemplation, that is, time out of time and space out of place; the invitation to seek out connections and be responsive to places by placing literature precipitates a poetic spatiality; and walking may reinforce kinaesthetic understanding of what is heard through heightened body awareness combined with the association of rhythm to physical experience and movement.

Whilst Macé, like Montaigne and Proust before her, prioritizes the act of cloistered reading, Manguel notes that the book itself offers its own interior space and, as such, functions as a refuge of sorts irrespective of where it is read -- 'whether in the busy scriptorium, the market-place or home' (Manguel 1997: 43). However, reflecting on The Walking Library, we would argue that this refuge of solitude afforded by reading is not limited to silent reading, but may also be shaped and experienced through the attentive -- interior -- space demanded by shared reading. The slowness of shared reading creates a social yet contemplative space, which promotes sensitivity to the relationship between what is read and the environment.

The idea of the book itself offering refuge is taken up directly in The Walking Library for Sweeney's Bothy. Creating a walking library for a bothy -- historically, a shelter located in a remote setting for use by shepherds or walkers -- prompted specific questions which framed the call for donations:

What book would you carry to Bothan Shuibhne -- wherever you imagine it to be -- for both the journey and your arrival? What book would provide you with shelter? Of solitude or companionship? To guide or get lost with? With spines upturned they too shelter worlds. Books as bricks, sometimes as heavy. Leaves that shade. Windows, hearths and thresholds to other times and places.

[Insert images 6 and 7]

When we walked with the donors who contributed to The Walking Library for Sweeney's Bothy we halted wherever a resonance was felt between the book donated and the place walked through: the roots of an upturned tree became the shelter for a dramatic scene from Trevor Joyce's Courts of Air and Earth (2008); heading towards Milngavie a lean-to or misplaced bus-shelter in a terminal state of collapse beside a local sports pitch hosted the sharing of the contents of Thoreau's hut at Walden Pond (Harnden, 2007); where the route carried us closer to the West End of the city a viaduct became a refuge from the rain and a stage and auditorium for a reading from Ted Kooser's Winter

Mourning Walks: one hundred postcards to Jim Harrison (2000). We agree wholeheartedly with Manguel's assertion that 'one can transform a place by reading in it' (ibid.), but we would also reverse this insight: one can transform a reading through placing it. What happens when books are curated, sited and recited within and for deliberately chosen places? To borrow from and extend Schnapp and Battles question, what are the 'world-making properties' and 'word-making properties' of The Walking Library? (Schnapps and Battles 2014: 26). Whilst we would not deny the pleasure of the refuge engendered by silent reading, The Walking Library foregrounds the ways convivial reading practices create spaces for attention and contemplation, with the book offered both as extension into and retreat from the world.

Temporalities of Walking and Reading

If The Walking Library is a spatial practice, it is also a temporal one; it takes and works with time as much as with space. The temporalities of the project are remarked in recurring words, including ephemeral, contingent, provisional, temporary, happenstance, becoming. Time is foregrounded as the structural and aesthetic material of some Walking Library editions, with one library created and carried for an overnight walk, and another curated to prompt thinking about deep time. All the libraries are made for specified walking durations, ranging from long-distance, long-duration walks in the company of mostly the same group of people (for example, The Walking Library for Sideways Festival and The Walking Library for Bedrock Walk), to walks of just 90 minutes (such as The Walking Library for Women Walking). There is the particular time of walking and reading too; the speed of walking potentially allowing more intimate and embodied experiences of place and social relations (see Ingold and Vergunst 2008) and the speed of reading aloud, a slower form of reading than sight-reading, noted already for its facilitation of a particular form of attention. Walking and reading also share a forward trajectory, each step taken and word read a movement into an unknowable future that brings with it a past (this future becoming, almost simultaneously, an indeterminate present and past too) (Grosz 2005).

As with all libraries, the books in The Walking Library are for loan only. The material relationship between book and walker-reader is temporary. The permitted length of borrowing depends on the conditions of any particular Walking Library. Different 'ways' of reading are prompted, in part, by the 'scale' -- the duration -- of each of The Walking Library's journeys. The duration of walks has influenced the selection of what to donate and the choice of what to carry (a light, small book for a longer walk; poetry rather than fiction, if literally walking and reading simultaneously rather than in breaks); how to read (silently to escape company on long journeys or emphatically to keep weary walkers energised); and, what to read (a carefully chosen extract from a known text which fits the environment or something selected rapidly or randomly from an unknown book). The rationales provided for each book given suggest careful consideration and intersubjective calibration between our directive question, the proposed walk and the donation. However, the choosing of books to walk with and the sharing of extracts for readings have been more varied, ranging from quickly identified moments of serendipity between encountered text and site, to offerings which are carefully deliberated. Walking for a long distance in the company of a collection of books allows both more browsing time across the collection and the development of familiarity with some of the stock. On longer walks, books have been returned to over and over again, with passages memorised by repeatedly reciting phrases to the rhythms of footfall.

We have noted above the relationship between words and world-making. Site-responsive reading also fosters an oscillation between words, place and time in a coeval relationship (Massey 2005). In The Walking Library for Walking Women, the door of an ancient wall preserved by the University of Bristol as a monument to ancient, disappeared places became, through the reading offered alongside it, also the door being slammed dramatically by the spurned lover of Simone de Beauvoir's Blood of Others (1945); the imagined slam resounding here as a monument to loss, as well as a prompt to consider the comings and goings through this particular door over the centuries, transforming it from sterile historical object to agent of history.

Our walks and the books we carry transport us through different time zones: ancient

buildings, preserved monuments memorials, statues, plaques and street names remark particular historical events or figures whilst readings from books insert other events and figures into the space. Searching for places to read, we are as attentive to what is missing as what is present. Looking and failing to identify monuments to and of women on The Walking Library for Women Walking in London, we stopped on the busy pavement to read from Virginia Woolf's essay, 'Street Haunting: A London Adventure' (1930), willing Woolf to return and haunt these streets denuded of female icons. Convivially, armed with books, we visibly and vocally walked and read ourselves and others into place and time, offering an extension of de Certeau's proposition of walking as a space of enunciation (1988: 98), our pedestrian speech act a literal one. Following in the historical footsteps of the Suffragettes as we retraced their walk to Hyde Park, carrying with us books considered good for a woman to take on a walk, our arrival at Parliament Square seemed to create its own performative landmark; our collection of books placed on the grass a provisional monument of sorts to other voices and stories. Here, Helen shared an extract from Doreen Massey's for space (2005), the text functioning as a remarkable re-orienting tool, giving new meaning to the phrase 'moved by words'.

The specifically spatial within time-space is produced by that -- sometimes happenstance, sometimes not -- arrangement-in-relation-to-each-other that is the result of there being a multiplicity of trajectories. In spatial configurations, otherwise unconnected narratives may be brought into contact, or previously connected ones may be wrenched apart. There is always an element of 'chaos'. This is the chance of space; the accidental neighbour is one figure for it. (Massey 2005; 111)

Read aloud to us, Massey's words and ideas time-travelled, shaped by and shaping the site of their enunciation. The chaos of chance connections and accidental neighbours, of pasts, presents and as yet unwritten futures was observed in Parliament Square's configurations: the overbearing presence of the Palace of Westminster; the statues of eleven statesmen; a temporary and vernacular memorial to the recently murdered

female Member of Parliament, Jo Cox; numerous groups of tourists, international students, families, and stragglers left over from an anti-austerity/anti-racism/anti-Tory demonstration; and us, a collection of mostly women carrying a collection of hand-picked books. There was something like happenstance too in the gathering of readings and authors that accumulated along the length of our communal walk: the spectres of Virginia Woolf and Doreen Massey walked this way together now, changing the journeys of each other and our own.

Conclusion

The Walking Library is a mobile library physically carried by walkers. Its mobility, however, is directly proportional to the shape (content and actions) the library takes in relation to its context and to the dynamic, interdependent relationships it sets up between people, places and books. Along with place, objects and corporeal bodies, the library also mobilizes ideas and imagination. Sociologist, John Urry, has written extensively about the 'mobility turn', yet his writings -- and those of other geographers and sociologists writing in the fields of mobility, spatiality and temporality -- have not given the book (or the mobile library for that matter) any consideration. The book is an object of movement; it accompanies corporeal travel and is a catalyst to imaginative, virtual and communicative travel. It demonstrably connects with Urry's interdependent 'mobilities' and as such, contributes actively to the production of 'social life organized across distance and which form (and re-form) its contours' (Urry 2007: 47).

It is worth remembering that the book was the first mobile technology, enabling wide circulation and distribution of knowledge. As we have seen with the historical development of the mobility of books both in their portable design and distribution, people's habits and the relationships that they have with books and their distribution change as that mobility continues to manifest in new forms. In our age of digital hyper-mobility, the term 'mobile library' is perhaps becoming most readily thought of as a library held within an electronic device, as books transform into mobile text. However, as noted above, in some contexts where communications infrastructure is either not in place or economically unviable, text held on electronic devices is not necessarily mobile

in itself, but relies upon the historical role of mobile libraries as a key democratizing tool of library services. It is imperative that such contexts and implications of digitized text are not neglected or threaten the historical advancement of democratic access to knowledge.

To date, The Walking Library has been committed to carrying paper books to enable the movement of and engagement with physical manifestations of texts. The Walking Library has offered temporary spaces for sociality, for shared contemplation, poetic spatiality and kinaesthetic comprehension. In doing so, it has generated a heightened sense of books' sociability, spatiality and mobility through a stronger understanding of the inter-dependencies of reading, walking, time and place. This might in the future further inform and facilitate the uptake of new digital forms of writing and books unhindered by social, economic and geographical barriers.

Acknowledgements

The Walking Library for Sideways Festival was funded by Carnegie Scotland, the University of Glasgow, and Falmouth University. Most Walking Libraries are dependent on donations of books and we are also grateful to our donators. Finally, we would like to thank our two peer reviewers for their rigorous and constructive feedback.

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The Walking Library

Since its inauguration in 2012, Heddon and Myers have developed a number of editions of The Walking Library.

The Walking Library for Sideways Festival (17 August--17 September 2012)

Sideways was an itinerant art festival which aimed to connect ecology and culture through using a network of underused, and in places, disappeared footpaths that offer alternatives to Belgium's dense and expanding road networks. We created a Walking Library for the festival gathering about 90 recommended titles which responded to the question: 'what book would you take on a walk?'. Over the duration of a month, we covered 334km on foot, reading as we went and lending books to our fellow walking-artists. Books carried included Werner Herzog's Of Walking in Ice (2007 [1974]), Dylan Thomas's The Outing (1971) and Rebecca Solnit's A Field Guide to Getting Lost (2006). The collection of books was donated to Sideways.

The Walking Library for Athens, Ohio: From Ohio to Scotland and Back Again (April 2013)

A temporary collection, this library was inspired in part by the creative mapping activities of the Situationists; in particular, the transposition of a map of one place onto a different physical site (Pinder 1996). Invited by the University of Ohio as a visiting artist, Dee travelled with a rucksack of books relating to Scotland, including Dorothy Wordsworth's Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland (1997 [1803]) and Nan Shepherd's The Living Mountain (1997 [1977]). Identifying in each book a key topography explored by the author she created a 'landscape list': wood, moor, river, beach, island, distillery, loch, mountain, street. Walking with a group of students, she was taken to places on the list (beach = volley ball pitch, bar = distillery) where she recited and re-sited extracts from the library in exchange for information from her companion walkers about the actual places visited.

The Walking Library for Bothan Suibhne (14--15 June 2013)

Commissioned by Alec Finlay and The Bothy Project for the Bothan Shuibhne (Sweeney's Bothy), an artist's retreat on the Isle of Eigg, this library sought donations of books to be carried to a place of shelter, or books which offered themselves, metaphorically, as places of shelter. The two day walk journeyed from Carbeth Huts in Stirlingshire, a community-owned off-grid hutting environment, to the Walled Garden in the west of Glasgow City, an artist-run venture which transformed an abandoned industrial space into a multi-purpose, outdoor performance venue. The walk joined up tangible desires for the redistribution of land and access, and the politics of ways and rights -- and right(er) ways -- of dwelling. These connections were reinforced as we kept in mind (and foot) the Bothy being built on the community-owned Hebridean island which boasts the world's first electricity grid powered by wind, water and sun. Donations included From Kyoto to Carbeth (2008) by Gerry Loose, The Path to the Sea (2006) by Thomas A Clark and The Poetics of Space (1992 [1958]) by Gaston Bachelard. In February 2014, Dee Heddon travelled to Eigg to install The Walking Library for Bothan Suibhne in the recently completed Bothy.

The Night Walking Library (28 June 2013)

The temporary Night Walking Library was created for Performance Studies International conference 'NOW THEN: Performance and Temporality'. Walking from dusk to dawn, we visited the numerous sleeping libraries of Palo Alto and Stanford. The contents of our rucksacks included Chris Yates' Nightwalk (2012), Catherine M. Valente's The Girl Who Fell Beneath Fairyland and Led the Revels There (2013), Charles Dickens' Night Walks (2010 [1860]) and the pocket guide, Collins Night Sky & Starfinder (2011). We walked battling jetlag and reflecting on the various temporalities of walking -- its historical practices, its rhythms, the relationship of time to the walker's experience, slow walking and slow reading.

The Walking Library for Bedrock Walk (15--21 July 2013)

The Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) commissioned The Walking Library for Bedrock Walk to accompany a six-day walk which followed an old thieves' road across the Highlands of Scotland. Bedrock Walk encouraged a small group of walkers to think about what lies underfoot, from the deep time of geology and the stories contained within sedimented layers of hard rock, to the tracks laid by the feet

that pass over them -- human and animal alike. With everything needed carried on backs, The Walking Library for Bedrock Walk was comprised of just two hand-made, slim volumes of excerpts recounting variously thieving or rocks, themselves thieved from poems, novels, short stories and essays. Amongst these were extracts from Simon Armitage's Stanza Stones Walks, Alyson Hallett's The Stone Library and Daphne du Maurier's Jamaica Inn (2003 [1936]). The volumes were donated to the RSGS.

Walking Library for 8--12 Year Olds (February 2014)

During her stay at Sweeney's Bothy on Eigg in 2014, Dee also walked to Eigg Primary School, carrying on her back a rucksack filled with books about walking, from factual texts explaining different ways that non-humans walk, to the lithographic gem Henry's Walk to Paris (2012) by Saul Bass and Leonore Klein. All the books carried had been suggested by members of the Walking Artists Network as books for 8 to 12 year olds. The books were left at the school.

The Walking Library for Women Walking (WLfWW) (July--September 2016)

The WLfWW was part of a national UK event, Walking Women, which offered a political intervention into the continuing marginalization of women in the emerging 'canon' of aesthetic walking practices (see Heddon and Turner 2012). Donations were prompted by the question: 'What book would you give to accompany a woman walking?' More than 100 publications were received, ranging from Louise Ann Wilson's art book, Warnscale: A Landmark Walk (2015) to Letters written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark by Mary Wollstonecraft (2009 [1796]). The WLfWW had three iterations: on 16-17 July, as part of Somerset House's UTOPIA Festival, it was walked by about 15 participants following the route of a 1905 suffragette procession; on 11 August, it was installed at Forest Fringe in Leith, Edinburgh and walked by about 30 participants completing a 90-minute circular walk; on 7 September the library traversed ground near the University of Bristol, on a 90 minute walk with 20 participants attending the Theatre and Performance Research Association's conference. On all walks, participants were invited to select and carry a book and share readings in places which seemed to offer a good fit, or where women seemed to be particularly present (e.g. monuments and street names). The collection will be donated to Glasgow Women's Library.

Full accounts of each edition can be accessed at
<https://walkinglibraryproject.wordpress.com/>